

# Massachusetts CANS Frequently Asked Questions

## What is CANS?

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths tool (CANS), developed by John S. Lyons, Ph.D., is a document that organizes clinical information collected during a behavioral health assessment in a consistent manner, to improve communication among those involved in planning care for a child or adolescent. The CANS is also used as a decision-support tool to guide care planning, and to track changing strengths and needs over time. The CANS is used in child-serving systems in more than 30 states across the country. There are two forms of the Massachusetts CANS (“CANS Birth through Four” and “CANS Five through Twenty”). In addition the CANS assessment form includes a determination of whether a child meets the criteria for Serious Emotional Disturbance.

## When does the use of CANS start?

**Option for certain providers to use CANS as part of behavioral health assessment, and bill enhanced rate for 90801 effective September 1, 2008**

Beginning **November 30, 2008**, MassHealth and the MassHealth Managed Care Entities (MCEs) will require a uniform behavioral health assessment process for members under the age of 21 that includes a comprehensive needs assessment using the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool.

Because many clinicians are being trained and certified in the use of the CANS now, effective **September 1, 2008**, MassHealth MCEs will reimburse at an enhanced rate CANS certified providers who optionally use the Massachusetts version of the CANS tool during a psychiatric diagnostic interview examination.

## Which services require the use of CANS?

Effective November 30, 2008, the CANS will be required as part of an initial behavioral health assessment and will be required to be updated every 90 days as the treatment plan is reviewed in the following services:

- Outpatient Therapy (diagnostic evaluations, individual, family, and group)
- Family Stabilization Team (FST)

The CANS must also be completed as part of a discharge planning process in the following 24-hour level of care services:

- Psychiatric inpatient hospitalization
- Community-Based Acute Treatment (CBAT)

## Where/when is the CANS not required?

*Treatment circumstances where the CANS is NOT required:*

- Psychopharmacology evaluations
- Psychological/Neuropsychological testing
- Emergency Services Provider (ESP) evaluations

- Acute Treatment Services for Substance Abuse
- Community Support Services for Substance Abuse
- Ongoing medication management
- Psychiatric Day Treatment
- Partial Hospitalization
- Structured Outpatient Addiction Program (SOAP)

Psychiatrists and Registered Nurse Clinical Specialists who provide behavioral health assessments and outpatient therapy (individual, group or couples/family) to members under the age of 21 are encouraged to become trained and certified on the CANS and to use it in their practice and will be paid an enhanced rate if they do so but will not be required to use the CANS at this time.

## **How do I get paid for services using the CANS?**

### *Payment for CANS in outpatient therapy*

The initial behavioral health assessments using the CANS for outpatient therapy (individual, family and group) is provided during a psychiatric diagnostic interview evaluation which is billed with the CPT code 90801 with modifier HA.

Effective September 1, 2008, MassHealth and the MassHealth MCEs will reimburse Providers at an enhanced rate for billing CPT 90801-HA to compensate for the additional scope of an assessment that includes the CANS. If you are enrolled in the network of an MCE, your MCE will communicate with you regarding billing procedures prior to September 1, 2008. MassHealth will communicate billing procedures to providers who participate directly in MassHealth through a fee for service provider agreement by November 30, 2008 by updating provider regulations and other relevant portions of the MassHealth Provider Manuals.

The review and updating of the CANS required every 90 days for members in ongoing individual, group or family therapy is part of treatment planning and documentation and, as such, is not a separately billable service.

### *Payment for CANS in all other services*

Rates and billing requirements for all other services are being reviewed. Further information on billing and payment for CANS in these services will be provided in advance of the November 30, 2008 effective date of the CANS requirement.

## **What are the CANS certification requirements?**

Clinicians who are required to use the CANS must pass an on-line CANS certification examination. This includes psychologists, LICSWs, LMHCs, LMFTs, LCSWs, or unlicensed Masters level clinicians working under the supervision of a licensed clinician. Bachelors level direct service providers or paraprofessionals will not be trained or certified in the CANS.

Certified clinicians can use both forms of the Massachusetts CANS ("CANS Birth through Four" and "CANS Five through Twenty").

## **How do I get trained and certified to use the CANS?**

Information on the CANS certification and training can be found on the web at <https://masscans.ehs.state.ma.us>. This web-site includes an on-line training course, an on-line certification exam, and the schedule of in-person CANS training sessions.

Persons with previous training for using the CANS do not need to repeat training offered in order to take the certification exam. For persons who have not received any CANS training, in-person training is being provided by University of Massachusetts Medical School at various dates and times across the state. Web-based on-line training is available now at the website listed above. Participation in both the in-person and Web-based training will be free of charge, and will include free Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Recertification is required every two years. In order to be recertified, log on to the Massachusetts CANS training website (<https://masscans.ehs.state.ma.us>) and pass the certification exam.

For more information on training, please contact the Massachusetts CANS Training Center by calling (508) 856-1016 or emailing [Mass.Cans@umassmed.edu](mailto:Mass.Cans@umassmed.edu).

## **Do I have to use the CANS in addition to other outcome measures?**

Effective November 30, 2008, MassHealth MCEs will accept the CANS as an outcome measure for members under the age of 21. No other outcome measure will be required by MassHealth MCEs for members under the age of 21. A provider still has the option, of course, to use additional measures for its own clinical or quality improvement purposes.

## **Is the CANS available in other languages?**

At this time, the CANS has not been translated into languages other than English. Providers working with members (or parents/guardians of members) whose first language is not English should be prepared to interpret the contents of the CANS in a way that can be understood by the member (or parent/guardian).

## **Will the CANS be used by state agencies other than MassHealth?**

Separate from MassHealth, certain other EOHHS agencies including the Departments of Mental Health (DMH), Children and Families (DCF), and Youth Services (DYS) will adopt the Massachusetts CANS for use within their programs. Those agencies will provide instructions to their providers.

## **What if someone already did an assessment with my client using the CANS?**

Effective November 30, 2008, the CANS is an integral, requisite part of the behavioral health assessment process. When a member is treated by more than one provider, each provider is required to perform their own behavioral health assessment which will include the CANS.

## **Where do I obtain the CANS forms?**

Beginning September 1, 2008, until the Web-based Mass CANS application described below is available, the CANS tool may be completed using a paper copy of the appropriate version of the Mass CANS ("Birth through Four", or "Five through Twenty"). Links to these forms as well as supporting documentation will be found at the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI)

website ([www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth)) and at the websites of the MassHealth MCEs.

When completed, the paper version of the CANS tool is part of the client medical record.

### **When do I start to use the web-based system for my CANS data?**

EOHHS is developing a new Web-based application that will permit our providers to enter and view CANS data in a secure environment. The CANS application will be accessible through EOHHS's Virtual Gateway Web portal. This application is scheduled to be available on or after November 30, 2008.

### **How do I get access to the web-based CANS system?**

To access the Virtual Gateway and the CANS application, your provider/agency organization must execute a Virtual Gateway Services Agreement (VGSA) and designate an Access Administrator who will administer individual account access on behalf of your organization.

Each clinician or data entry operator who will be entering and viewing data in the CANS application will need a Virtual Gateway User ID, which is requested by your organization's Access Administrator.

To assist your organization in the process of being granted access to the CANS tool, please follow these simple steps and send your responses back to the following email address:

[VirtualGatewayCBHI@state.ma.us](mailto:VirtualGatewayCBHI@state.ma.us)

- *Name of your Organization*
- *Identify a CANS point of contact for your organization (This person will be working with the Virtual Gateway Deployment to assure that your organization has met all of the requirements necessary to access the CANS tool by November 30, 2008)*
  - *Name of person*
  - *Address*
  - *Phone*
  - *Email*
- *Does your organization already have access to the Virtual Gateway Web portal (Yes or No)*
- *Number of clinicians or data entry operators needing access to the CANS tool*
- *Has anyone from your organization completed the CANS tool assessment training? (Yes or No) If yes, number of individuals that have completed training.*

Please send responses back as soon as possible and no later than August 15<sup>th</sup>. The sooner we get responses, the quicker we can begin the on-boarding process.

If you have any comments or concerns, please send them to: [VirtualGatewayCBHI@state.ma.us](mailto:VirtualGatewayCBHI@state.ma.us)

### **Where can I get more information?**

If you have questions regarding requirements about the CANS, or about billing for services in which a behavioral health assessment using the CANS is provided, contact your MassHealth MCE. Providers serving members in non-managed care fee-for-service should contact MassHealth Customer Service at (800) 841-2900.

If you need technical assistance with the Virtual Gateway (VG), you may contact the VG Customer Service group at **1-800-421-0938**. If you have questions regarding CANS training or certification, contact the Massachusetts CANS Training Center by calling **(508) 856-1016** or emailing [Mass.Cans@umassmed.edu](mailto:Mass.Cans@umassmed.edu).

*For additional information about the development and use of the CANS in other states*

Visit the Praed Foundation website at [www.buddinpraed.org](http://www.buddinpraed.org) for the most comprehensive description of the history and development of the CANS approach.

A bibliography of published papers on the CANS is also available at the website of the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI): [www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth)